THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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JAB-O-METER — TAKE YOUR SHOT

December 09	67,11,113 doses
December 10	66,63,955 doses
TOTAL DOSES:	1,90,73,072

NATIONWIDE	DEC 09	DEC 10
Fresh cases	9,419	8,503
Recoveries	8,251	7,678
Deaths	159	624

KARNATAKA	DEC 09	DEC 10
Fresh cases	373	314
Recoveries	292	339
Deaths	4	2

JULIAN ASSANGE LOSES COURT BATTLE TO STOP U.S. EXTRADITION

London High Court on Friday overturned a lower court ruling that barred the WikiLeaks founder's extradition from the UK to the US

HOME SECY PRITI PATEL WILL HAVE FINAL SAY

The high court asked the lower court judge to send the extradition request to Home Secretary Priti Patel, who will have the final say on whether to extradite Assange. Assange's fiancee Stella Moris said an appeal will be filed. The lower court had rejected Assange's extradition saying his mental health was too fragile to withstand the American criminal justice system

COURT ACCEPTS U.S. WORD ON FAIR PLAY

- The high court allowed the extradition after accepting the US' assurance that it would treat Assange humanely
- Assange, 50, is currently lodged at Belmarsh Prison in London. He is wanted in the US over the publication of classified military and diplomatic documents in 2010 and 2011 P12

175 years

MAXIMUM JAIL TERM ASSANGE FACES IN THE U.S. FOR ALL CHARGES AGAINST HIM

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People participate in the funeral procession of Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat from his residence to Brar Square in Delhi Cantonment, in New Delhi on Friday | PTI

Retd officers can enter CDS race?

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

WITH the cremation of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, the process to select his successor is expected to be expedited. Whether or not the talent pool to pick his successor would include retired officers is not clear, though the global trend is to promote a serving chief to the high office, a senior officer said.

Technically though, the government would be well within its rights to recall a retired officer for the position, as the post of CDS has not been ratified as an Act of Parliament, another officer informed. "The position of CDS has been created as per an Executive Order of the government. So, as of now, nothing stops the government from appointing a retired officer as CDS," he said.

Army Chief General M M Naravane is the senior most among his peer group, as Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari and Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar took charge recently. While Gen Naravane is due to retire in April 2022, the two-year fixed tenures of the other two will end in 2023.

Had tragedy not struck, General Rawat would have signed off in December 2023.

The formal process to name the successor is initiated by the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee. The Chiefs of Staff Committee comprises the Army, Navy and IAF chiefs. The request is forwarded to the defence ministry, which forwards it to the Cabinet Committee on Security for selection. The CDS is vested with a whole lot of powers on procurement, modernisation, promotions and postings. P9

Varun Singh still critical, but stable

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

GROUP Captain Varun Singh, the sole survivor of the Mi17V5 helicopter crash in which Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and 12 others were killed on Wednesday near Conoor in Tamil Nadu, continues to be critical but stable, said sources. He is in the intensive care unit at the Command Hospital in Bengaluru, where he was admitted on Thursday evening.

According to sources, Command Hospital, like any Defence hospital, has the mechanism to share the expertise of any civil and private hospital in the interest of the patient's treatment. So far, the Air Force Hospital has not reached out to any corporate hospital for help regarding the injured officer's treatment, they added.

"Doctors and surgeons in Forces specialise in trauma care. They are well trained to take care of war and trauma injuries. If need be, they can seek the best help possible for treatment of their patients from any other hospital," said a source. P7

Industrial production at 8-month low in Oct; current growth cycle not durable, says Nomura

Muted IIP growth casts shadow over economic recovery

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

AFTER showing some signs of improvement, India's industrial production growth slipped to an eight-month low of 3.2% in October, a festive month when the output should have been better. Performance of the eight core industries was muted by the poor show of the manufacturing sector.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office on Friday, the manufacturing sector, which constitutes 77.63% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), grew at tepid 2.04% in October. Mining activity grew 11.4%, while power generation rose 3.1%. The IIP had grown by 4.5% in October 2020.

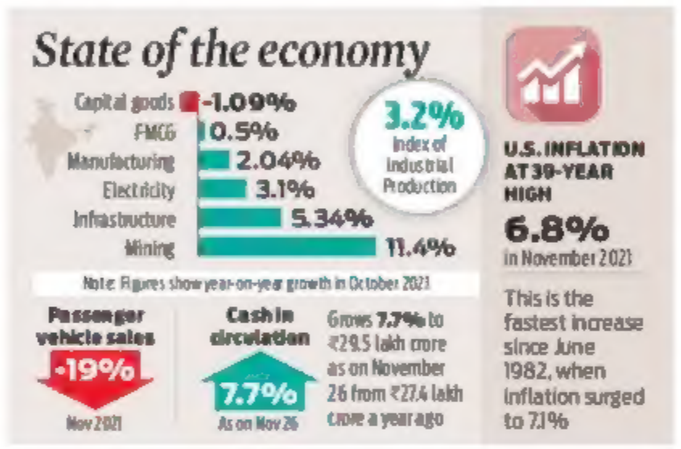
Capital and consumer goods, which indicate revival in demand, also presented a bleak picture. Capital goods output dropped 1.1% in October compared with a 2.4% growth in September. Despite being the festive month, consumer durables contracted 6.1% against 18.1% growth in October 2020.

Consumer non-durables (fast moving consumer goods), grew just 0.5% in October, against 7.3% growth a year ago.

Experts say the trend during the festive month shows recovery is not sustainable and that IIP growth is likely to remain sluggish in the near future.

"The disaggregated data does not provide convincing signals of the recovery becoming durable and broad-basing further, with capital goods and consumer durables reporting a YoY contraction in October 2021," said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar.

Indian economy grew 8.4% in the second quarter of FY22. Many rating agencies have already cut the country's growth forecast. On Friday, Japanese brokerage Nomura said the current growth cycle being witnessed in India is not durable and will peak by the first half of 2022. It said the recovery has been uneven, hurting consumption of lower-income households, and a sustained capital expenditure cycle is also not in sight. "Overall, we do not see the current growth cycle as durable. With mixed growth, high inflation and wider twin deficits, we expect India's risk premium to rise and the RBI to catch up as it falls behind the curve," its analysts said, citing low vaccination drive and stretched government finances.


State of the economy
Capital goods -1.09%
FMCG 0.5%
Manufacturing 2.04%
Electricity 3.1%
Infrastructure 5.34%
Mining 11.4%
3.2% Index of Industrial Production
Note: Figures show year-on-year growth in October 2021
Passenger vehicle sales -19% Nov 2021
Cash in circulation 7.7% As on Nov 26
Grows 7.7% to ₹29.5 lakh crore as on November 26 from ₹27.4 lakh crore a year ago
U.S. INFLATION AT 39-YEAR HIGH
6.8% in November 2021
This is the fastest increase since June 1982, when inflation surged to 7.1%

Omicron can escape vax immunity: Dr Coetzee

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

WITH the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus already in India, there can be no place for complacency on the part of the people despite completing vaccination, as this variant is able to escape vaccine immunity within four months of completion of vaccine dosage, **Dr Angelique Coetzee**, Chairperson, South African Medical Association, who first flagged the highly mutated variant in South Africa, told The New Indian Express in an exclusive interview.

While the intensity of symptoms with Omicron is less in those who are vaccinated, Dr Coetzee said she observed this vaccine immunity-escape capability of Omicron from data collected on patients who were positive with this variant.

"We have two major vaccines here (in South Africa): Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson. In both cases, the data I have collected has shown that people who were vaccinated in July with both doses have been reinfected or even had a breakthrough infection with Omicron. This means that one can't be complacent and stay away from getting tested if symptoms show after three months of vaccination," she stressed.

She said Omicron patients presented "very different" symptoms as compared to those infected by the Delta variant. "I have seen nearly 600 patients with the Delta variant, and the symptoms mainly were fever, sore throat, cough, loss of smell and taste, and low saturation. But in Omicron, none of these exist. It is mainly body ache, severe headache, myalgia and fatigue. A test after 24-48 hours of these symptoms is important. If you test early there are chances of testing false negatives," she said.

FULL INTERVIEW ON: P3

Members of local bodies wait to cast their franchise in the Legislative Council election in Mysuru on Friday | UDAYSHANKAR S

NEAR 100% VOTING IN COUNCIL ELECTIONS

RAMU PATIL @ Bengaluru

THE polling for 25 Legislative Council seats from 20 local body constituencies, which is set to reflect the mood in rural areas and determine the ruling BJP's efforts to gain a majority in the 75-member Upper House, recorded a high voter turnout of 99.8 per cent on Friday.

The results of the intensely-fought biennial elections will be announced on December 14. The elections to the 25 seats were conducted as the terms of 14 Congress, seven BJP and four JDS members are ending in January 2022. This time, the voter turnout was slightly higher than 99.6 per cent recorded in these constituencies in December 2015.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Farm unions shift focus to full debt waiver in Punjab

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

FLUSHED with success in forcing the Centre to rollback the three contentious farm sector laws, farmers will now press the Punjab government to honour the Congress promise made in 2017 on complete debt waiver for tillers.

They intend to start an indefinite protest if the government fails to implement it. The estimated size of Punjab's farm debt ₹1.25 lakh crore.

On the flip side, the bar imposed by farmer unions on election campaigning in villages is now off. Punjab will go to polls along with four other states in just a few months.

Talking to this newspaper, BKU leader Harinder Singh Lakhowal said, "The state government has already accepted most of our demands but the main one on debt waiver is still pending. Once we reach home, farmer unions will hold individual and collective meetings and give the state government an ultimatum to waive off loans as promised by the Congress before it came to power in 2017. If they fail to do so, we will not allow their candidates, leaders and party workers to enter villages for campaign."

Farmers celebrate as they prepare to go back home, at Ghazipur border on Friday | PTI

Another farmer leader Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan said they will call a state-level meeting of their union after returning home from Delhi and decide on the strategy to pressure the Channi government to waive off farm loans. "Political leaders can enter villages for campaigning, but we will give them set of questions to help us make an informed choice on which party to vote," he added.

A third leader, Omkar Singh, echoed them. "We will hold meetings to build pressure on debt waiver in Punjab," he said.

DISCHARGE RULES

Covid-19 patients can be discharged if:

- Symptom-free 10 days after infection
- Only after 2 negative RT-PCR reports 24 hours apart
- No fever or any other symptoms for last three days before discharge
- Maintain saturation of above 95% for four consecutive days
- Breathlessness, other clinical symptoms are fully treated

P3

Mental health survey in 6 cities

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), in association with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, will conduct the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) - Phase 2 on urban mental health in six metros and two Tier-II cities in Karnataka from February 2022.

NIMHANS Director Prathima Murthy announced the survey while briefing the media on Friday. The survey will cover 3,600 sample population each in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Tier-II cities – Hubballi-Dharwad and Mysuru in Karnataka.

The survey would look into the extent of mental health problems, access and systems that govern mental health care. "The survey would also look at memory disturbances, behavioural addiction such as social media and gaming addiction, anxiety, children's issues, their mental wellbeing and impact of Covid on people," said Murthy.

CONTINUED ON: P7

EXPRESS READ

Aryan Khan seeks change in bail condition

Mumbai: Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan's son Aryan Khan approached the Bombay High Court on Friday for modification of his bail condition to appear before the Narcotics Control Bureau every Friday between 11 am and 2 pm. Aryan's plea states that his bail condition could be relaxed as the cruise ship drugs case is transferred to an SIT.

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